

From: Marvin Mellem
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/21/01 10:05am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement.

Hi,

Don't settle! It's as simple as that. I've read article upon article stating how antitrust cases are supposed to be 'forward looking' and yet I don't see that happening here!

Why did you guys take breaking up the company off the table? There was no pressure to do that or for you guys to NOT go after Windows XP. Sigh...here's my beef. The whole deal is about how Microsoft ties these products into their OS's and kills off competition right? Well have you looked at Windows XP yet? I don't wanna HAVE TO get a MS Passport to enjoy some features in my OS. Especially since some guy has already compromised its security. Yet Microsoft is forcing me to do so, UNFAIR! I mean they killed Netscape for crying out loud, and I've been on the internet for about six years now, yet THIS YEAR is the first time that I have had to switch from Netscape to Internet Explorer as my default browser. The only reason I did that was because more and more sites are optimising surfing for Microsoft web browsers only.

Now all that I've said till now IS valid, but here is my main problem. I'm from South Africa, and economics being how they are the USD is roughly ten times stronger than our Rand. So, say I want to go buy a copy of Windows XP Home Edition, I have to fork out just under R1 100 to buy it directly from the SUPPLIER! And as a general consumer I don't even have the necessary access to buy it from the supplier. I have to buy it from the stores who are bound to charge me more.

Now if you think that is bad, listen to this. I work in the IT field, I have a good PC at home, but if I'm to be taking my IT work and studies seriously I can't do it on Windows XP HE, I need to buy myself a copy of XP Professional so that I can learn it to keep ahead of the pack in this cut throat market we have here. But you wanna know the retail price on that? Can you guess? It costs over R3 200 at the SUPPLIER once more...now you see all those figures would be okay if I earned say...R20k per month or so, but I don't. I get to walk home with roughly R3,4k/month after tax deductions...etc. Can you see me getting my hands on a copy of Windows XP Professional LEGALLY?

Now I read somewhere that it was discussed as part of a settlement that Microsoft develop a 'barebones' version of its OS? Well I like that idea!!! I LOVE my third party software, there isn't much in the actual Windows OS suite that I actually use. I prefer Symantec for antivirus software as well as disk maintenance software...etc. I used

to prefer WordPerfect till MS Office became the standard down here(not that it's tied into the OS thank God). I may use media player from time to time, but that can be downloaded off the internet, and I can live without it because I have another video player(shareware) that actually works better than media player. Heck I even prefer Winamp to play my songs over media player, it's too big/bulky/clunky.

I startup Windows and what do I use? Windows Explorer, the MS Dos prompt(which is gone nowadays from what I hear), rarely notepad(it sucks like wordpad does, I mean why tie in barebones word processors like that which are never used?). I don't use Scandisk anymore since I have Norton's Disk Doctor which works only 100 times better(always has). I don't need to use disk cleanup either since Symantec Systemworks has Cleansweep which works better than disk cleanup. Heck let's just say that I don't even use any windows 'glitter'. I use the OS, install my own study/work software and that is all I do. I don't sit in MS paint or imaging or any of those Windows apps. I just use the Windows OS.

So the proposed plan to get Microsoft to make a 'barebones' OS is a good one if it will drastically reduce software prices for me. I mean think about it, there is a GLOBAL economy here. MY country is one of many working on plans to BRIDGE the digital divide between first and third world countries, and how can we do that when the Software which is the 'blood' of the digital era is so darn expensive?

Just food for thought, use it, don't use it...it's free. :-)

:-)

PS: I read about the settlement that they give funding for PC's for underpriveledged schools, well my questions is if you settle with a payment strategy, then how does that answer the question of a 'forward looking' anti-trust settlement? From my understanding it wont answer any of the questions of the laws Microsoft was found guilty of breaking and in doing so it only entitles them to a fresh round of breaking more antitrust laws.

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